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# Timeout Session: Kobe Williamson Hits New Level in Year Four

Qasim Ali, Sports & Opinion Editor



Kobe



Peiran Liu

Williamson's role with Seattle University Men's Basketball mirrors his personality and demeanor: often understated and quiet, but impactful. As a biochemistry major, you'd be hard-pressed to find anyone in Capitol Hill with a more packed schedule than the 6'8" junior forward from Melbourne, Australia.

His title of junior only applies to his athletic eligibility, as Williamson has already played four seasons with the team. He spent his freshman season with the Seattle U as a staple, starting all 23 games. As talent filtered through the program, his place on the roster would vary.

Williamson would start 14 games over his next two seasons, taking a smaller role with the team despite his seniority with the program growing. But after last season, the Redhawks would be in need at the forward position. Williamson seized that opportunity, and with three games left this season, he's started in 28 of the 30 games he's played and is

averaging career-highs in points, field goal percentage, rebounds, blocks and steals. He also hit two game-winners this season, both putbacks, against California Baptist Feb. 3 and Utah Tech Feb. 17.

But beyond the stat sheet lies a story of tradition, hard work and sacrifice.

The following is a condensed interview with Kobe Williamson from Feb. 23. Questions are paraphrased for brevity.

QA: How do you balance a tough major like biochemistry and being on a team that travels and practices so often?

KW: "There's a lot of communication that goes on behind the scenes just with professors and my academic advisor. One, just trying to get the classes to fit our schedule... Two, like on the road, it's just about making the most of our off-time to get work done... It gets tricky trying to find the balance of social life, basketball and school, normally one of them takes a hit. Generally it's the social life but, I mean, that's alright during season."

QA: How has being with this program impacted your growth off the court?

KW: "I think organizational skills have just been a big one, just as a life skill trying to juggle everything. Taking care of my dog, basketball, managing school work, it's such a full-on schedule with little free time. And just being able to communicate with people, asking if I need something, to extend a due date, I think that's been a big part. Before I came to college, I'd just be walking through Target and I'd be scared to ask someone, 'Where I can find this item?' But now I really don't care, so I've been able to come out of my shell a little bit."

QA: On the court, I've noticed you've been in the post a lot this season as well.

KW: "That's probably been the biggest thing that's changed... I think this season there's been more opportunity to play in the post, which has been awesome. And I love that my teammates trust giving me the ball in the post."

QA: Earlier in the season you missed a shot against Stephen F. Austin (SFA) in crunch time and the team lost in overtime. What was your thought process going from that moment to now having two game-winners on the season?

KW: "SFA, I was really bummed I missed that... And then the other two [game-winners], I don't think there was much thought behind it, it happened I guess. They always say crash hard for rebounds, I guess everyone's ball-watching and trying to go block the shot and then they sort of forget about you... I was lucky enough the ball bounced in my direction that it paid off... It's like all those sayings, like, 'Luck is what you work for.'"

QA: Any plans for post-college?

KW: "Hopefully it's basketball. I'd like to play in the NBL in Australia and just be back at home. If something presented itself in Europe, I'm always open to that too... If basketball wasn't the goal, hopefully I'd go into medical school—it sounds pretty cool to be an anesthesiologist... But to be honest, I really don't know, I'm sort of taking it day by day, step by step."

QA: I've got to ask, is there a story behind the mustache look?

KW: "My dad would always grow one, he'd shave it off after a week or two and I'd pick on him... Then I started to grow one, dad would pick on me, and I just kept growing it out to get a reaction from him, then my uncle started chiming in and I started to do it to get a reaction out of them. I think it looks ridiculous still to this day when I look in the mirror, but yeah I just did it to get reactions out of them to be honest, just as a family joke. And I've been too lazy to shave it off you know?"

Williamson and the Redhawks have three games remaining this year and the Western Athletic Conference Tournament in March, and he plans to return next season for his last year at Seattle U. With more seniors graduating and Williamson getting more experience, one can guess his role will only increase with the team going forward.